



Ship Scrapping Company and Owners Sentenced for Environmental Crimes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2012

NORFOLK, Va. – Steven E. Avery, 56, of Bohannon, Va., Billy J. Avery, 81, of Virginia Beach, Va., and the corporation Sea Solutions, Inc., were all sentenced today in Norfolk federal court for various environmental crimes stemming from their activities in the ship scrapping business. Steven Avery was sentenced to 1 year in prison and a \$25,000 fine, Billy Avery was sentenced to 5 years probation, 9 months home confinement, and a \$25,000 fine, and Sea Solutions was sentenced to 1 year probation and is barred from further engaging in the ship scrapping business. The three defendants were also collectively ordered to pay \$66,402.41 in restitution.

Neil H. MacBride, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and David G. McLeod, Jr., Special Agent in Charge of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) criminal enforcement program in Virginia, made the announcement after sentencing by U.S. District Judge Arenda L. Wright Allen. All three previously entered guilty pleas to the charges on April 13, 2012.

"The defendants knowingly polluted the environment through their illegal discharges," said EPA SAC McLeod. "Today's sentencing sends a clear message to other potential violators that companies and their senior executives will be held responsible for their actions and intentional noncompliance with the law will be prosecuted."

According to court documents, Steven and Billy Avery operated the defendant corporation, Sea Solutions, Inc. In February 2010, Sea Solutions, Inc. purchased a vessel known as *M/V Snow Bird* for the purpose of scrapping, with the knowledge that it contained a quantity of petroleum products and other pollutants. Despite knowing that these waste products were onboard the *M/V Snow Bird* and needed to be removed, the defendants commenced scrapping operations with the pollutants onboard. Over the course of several months, witnesses complained of pollutants emanating from the *M/V Snow Bird*. Finally, in October of 2010, the defendants caused a major spill of oil, oily water, and other pollutants from the *M/V Snow Bird* into the Elizabeth River. The cleanup operation removed several thousand gallons of oily waste from the Elizabeth River and the shoreline at the cost to the United States of over \$66,000.

This case was investigated by agents from the EPA, the Coast Guard Investigative Service, and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Assistant United States Attorneys Joseph L. Kosky and Melissa O'Boyle prosecuted the case on behalf of the United States.